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PHILOSOPHICAL EXPLORATION OF RAJA RAO'S PROTAGONISTS: A CRITICAL STUDY OF HIS NOVELS

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I) Introduction

If we consider that the literature is the mirror of society then we may come to know that the impact and impression of the present situations and conditions of the society replicate through the work of art of literature. As we see, the passion and strong patriotic feelings for the nation in the period of Mahatma Gandhi were observed in the contemporary literature. People were crazy for the freedom and busy in the movement against British rulers. People were ready to die for the nation. In such local and national movement, many young men and women were participated. People were ready to sacrifice their wealth. People were educated and used to prefer to go abroad for education. Sometimes such young people got married, settled over there out of need but longing for the nation. They got married with foreign woman but could not match with foreign culture because they were born and brought up from India, their roots were Indian. Sometimes some common weaknesses and issues of human beings like sex, anger, extra marital affairs, sorrow, alienation, happiness, quest for knowledge, exploration of metaphysical life, and journey towards reality are manifested in the writings of contemporary writers. There are many aspects of the life of human being as psychological, spiritual, philosophical, social, political, religious, cultural in which a man uses to involve himself.

Raja Rao touched near about all the aspects of the life in his writing . A person cannot achieve all the goals in a single life. He longs for many but can be only one. Such longingness we may find in the writings of a writer. In such writings, protagonists are important. Protagonists are the hero of the novel or drama. The protagonist in the novels of Raja Rao plays different

roles. They are common person. They are not kings, prince, or belonging to noble family. Raja Rao has depicted the multifaceted protagonists in his novels. Such as in the novel *Kanthapura,* Moorthy presented as a village Gandhi who selects the path of Gandhi. In the second novel *The serpent and the Rope,* Ramaswamy is in search of knowledge. The third novel *The Cat and Shakespeare* is a metaphysical comedy that answers philosophical questions through which we may see the protagonist Ramkrishna Pai's journey towards ultimate reality. In the fourth novel *Comrade Kirillove.* we may see Padmanabh Iyer's exploration and manifestation as a communist. In the fifth novel *The Chessmaster and His Moves,* we may see Sivaram Sastri's metaphysical exploration of life.

Raja Rao was born on November 8, 1908 in Hassan, in the state of Mysore, (now in Karnataka, South India) in a Smartha Brahmin family of the Hoysala, a Karnataka caste. His father, H.V. Krishnaswamy, taught Kannada at Nizam College in what was then Hyderabad State. His mother Gauramma, was a homemaker who died when Raja Rao was four year old. He was the eldest son of nine siblings (two brothers and seven sisters). His native language was Kannada, but his post-graduate education was in France, and all his publications in book form have been in English. He has handled various themes in his novels. His involvement in the national freedom fight is reflected in his first novel *Kanthapura*. The novel *Kanthapura* , written in 1938, was an account of the impact of the Gandhi's teaching on nonviolent resistance against the British. The second novel *The Serpent and the Rope* is written in 1960. The novel is about a search for spiritual truth and quest for knowledge in India, France and England. For this novel Raja Rao got Sahitya Akademi Award in 1964. The third novel '*The Cat and Shakespeare'* is written in 1965. The novelist has called it a as aa philosophical comedy. It is sub-titled ,"*A Tale of Modern India"* . The novel is about two friends Govindan Nair and Rama Krishna Pai. In this

novel the story, picturisation and language are superfluous. Both friends are clerk in the rationing office. In this Govindan Nair is charged with corruption . His senior ,Boothlinga Iyer dies of heart attack as a cat jumps suddenly on his bald head. Govindan Nair brings cat in the court of law. He defends himself by saying that he has done by the order of his boss. The fourth novel *Comrade Kirillove* is written in 1976. It is a sketch of a South Indian man , Padmanabh Iyer. The book is an exploration of communist manifestation in modern man. The fifth novel *The Chessmaster and His Moves* is written in 1988. In the novel Raja Rao explores a seemingly tragic love affair between an Indian mathematician, Sicarama Sastri living in Paris and a married woman, a Rajput princess Jayalaksmi married to Raja Surender Singh. Such relationships bring sorrow and despair in its train and the next best course is to turn inwards to search for answers and meanings. This very search transforms the book into metaphysical exploration. Raja Rao has been awarded by Sahitya Academi Award in 1964. He has been awarded Padma Bhushan, India's third highest civilian award in 1969. He is the winner of Neustadt International Prize For literature in 1988. He has been awarded Padma Vibhushan, India's second highest civilian award. From *Kanthapura* , *The Serpent and the Rope* through *The Cat and Shakespeare* and to *The Chessmaster and His Moves* which is also about the journey to seek deliverance from self . The present research is intended to study Raja Rao's five novels and to highlight the philosophical exploration and journey of the male protagonist throughout the novels.

II Objectives of the Present Study:

The present research work will attempt to achieve the following aims and objective.

- To examine critically the novels of Raja Rao
- To analyze the themes of Raja Rao's novels.

- To study the development of the protagonist in the novels of Raja Rao.
- To search the various threads in the novels of Raja Rao.
- To highlight the Freedom fight ,Gandhian Movements in the novels of Raja Rao
- To present the quest for knowledge, search for spiritual knowledge of the protagonist in the novel of Raja Rao.
- To focus on the social, political, educational, cultural, spiritual impact on the protagonist which make them to change their behavior.
- To take the follow up of the journey towards ultimate reality.
- To expose the exploration of communist manifestation in modern man.
- To focus on the effect of different relations on personal life.
- To explain the protagonist's metaphysical and philosophical exploration of life

III Hypothesis:

The present study is based on the following hypothesis-

- All the novels of Raja Rao deal with philosophical exploration of the man and analyze the keen observation of the behavior of the man
- The novels are the semi-autobiography of the writer.
- All the protagonists of the novels are influenced by the Indian philosophy.
- His novels reflect human psyche, alienation, isolation, metaphysical exploration of the life, quest for knowledge.

IV Tentative Chapter Scheme- ***PHILOSOPHICAL EXPLORATION OF RAJA RAO'S PROTAGONISTS: A CRITICAL STUDY OF HIS NOVELS***

. This research tentatively proposes to follow the chapter scheme given below:

	Preface and Acknowledgement
Chapter-I	Introduction
Chapter-II	On Path of Mahatma: Moorthy in *Kanthapura*
Chapter-III	Quest for Knowledge: Ramaswamyin *TheSerpent and the Rope*
Chapter-IV	Journey Towards Ultimate Reality: RamkrishnaPai in *The Cat and Shakespeare*
Chapter-V	Exploration of Communist Manifestation: PadmanabhIyer in *Comrade Kirilove*
Chapter-VI	Metaphysical Exploration of Life: SivaramSastri in *The Chessmaster and His Moves*
Chapter-VII	Conclusion
	Bibliography

The first chapter will make the survey of Indo-Anglican novels and Raja Rao's contribution in it , brief review of literature ,significance of the study , aims and objective, scope and limitations of the study, the research methodology and the explanations of key concepts and will succeeded to set the context for next chapter.

The second chapter will analyze Raja Rao's first novel *Kanthapura* and it will highlight the protagonist – Moorthy's life his inspiration of the following the path of Mahatma Gandhi. He is referred as the Gandhi man in the novel.

The third chapter will highlight Raja Rao's second novel *The serpent and the Rope* and it will analyze the protagonist Ramaswami's quest for knowledge. It will explore Ramswami's finding the way of self-realization. It is the Ramswami's quest for knowledge and its representation.

The fourth chapter will analyze Raja Rao's third novel *The Cat and Shakespeare* and it will take the follow up of the final truth of the death of the boss Boothalinga Iyer, dies of heart failure as a cat jumps suddenly on his bald head. The protagonist Ramkrishna Pai is there in this matter as a clerk his colleague Govindan Nair both have to present themselves in the court and prove and carry out the truth. The personal and professional both lives of the protagonist are disturbed in the novel.

The fifth chapter will analyze Raja Rao's fourth novel *Comrade Kirillove* and it will be the exploration of Communist manifestation of the protagonist Padmanabh Iyer.

The sixth chapter will analyze Raja Rao's fifth novel *The Chessmaster and His Moves* and it will highlight the metaphysical exploration of the life of the protagonist-Sivaram Sastri. In this chapter the tragic love affair of the protagonist with a married woman and how the relationship brings sorrow and despair, which predicament leads to a search for answers and meanings. This very search transforms the situation into metaphysical exploration.

The seventh chapter will conclude the analysis, interpretation, explorations and evaluation made in the previous chapters made in the previous chapters. It will try to prove that the protagonists of Raja Rao represent the different aspects of the common life. They are not merely characters but the live model of the social man and philosophically oriented and influence

men. The above mentioned novels are somewhat writer's semi-autobiographical novels which recount a search for spiritual truth which a common man needs in life when he feels stress in his life. In common human life a man has to play different roles. In our common life there are many issues because of not only cultural ,religious differences but also because of some personal attitude. We try to find out solutions on such type of problems.

VI) Significance of the study:

The present research study intends to show Raja Rao's distinctiveness in presenting the protagonist throughout the novel and their philosophical explorations. Raja Rao's novels are the depiction of the protagonist's struggles with commitments, ambitions, spiritual quest, uncertainty, worldly desires and renouncing worldly desires and the influence of Indianness. The person having the root of India will be the Indian only by the structure of ideology and philosophy. The present research will also show the reactions of the modern advanced men to their life in India and western culture. It will also make us aware of the effect of the root and rootlessness on our life. It will focus and emphasize for the need of balance between family and the ideology for the betterment of the life. It will be helpful to the young generation who are aspiring for the foreign to not to forget the root of being an Indian./ our birth. The study will support to change the human attitude and perspectives to live a healthy and happy life.

VII) Research Methodology:

The present research proposes to undertake multidisciplinary methods of research such as analytical, interpretative and evaluative. After studying all the novels, the protagonists of the novels of Raja Rao will be analyzed, evaluated and assessed on the basis of their significance,

existence, reactions with other characters with reference to relevant in the present chapter. Finally the general findings and inferences would be put forth. MLA recent methodology (8th edition) will be strictly followed for documentation.

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